

Lakewood, CA - On Saturday April 14, 2003 Congresswoman Linda Sánchez met with local parents to discuss the potential changes facing the Head Start Program. Thirty parents from the cities of Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, Long Beach, Paramount, Whittier, Buena Park and Commerce were in attendance.

Parental concern has grown from the proposed Republican changes to the thirty-seven year old child development program. Under the new Republicans reauthorization plan, sweeping changes could drastically undermine the program's broad mission of comprehensive children's services.

"By changing the current funding mechanism from federal grants to state controlled block grants, there will be less money going into services. It is critical to keep Head Start funded at the federal level, especially during these times of state budget deficits," said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez

Sánchez listened to the concerns and personal testimonies from the parents of local Head Start children. Parents openly shared their opinions and ideas with the Congresswoman, while Sánchez provided the parents with the latest policy updates.

"Head Start programs meet children's needs through a holistic approach and concentrated parental involvement. This program is the primary source of early education for many hard working families. These parents want and deserve the best for their children."

Sánchez assured parents that she would continue to monitor the progress of the Head Start legislation as it passes through the Congress. The legislation is currently going through revisions and is expected to come the House floor for a vote at the end of June.

"We need to increase funding for Head Start and Early Head Start, not produce or support legislation that will shortchange children. Changes to the Head Start program should be designed to make the program stronger for California's children, not weaker."